1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

765
259
476

A rice-pounding bee several days before a death feast payoff.

342

The largest rice cones of two ceremonial seasons, prepared for a lineage house-building feast.

[p. 32a H]

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

159 was always traveling back and forth between two places. [Did he search for a wife there?] I wanted to marry there but didn't. A woman spoke to me, but I didn't want to marry her. It would have meant staying there, and water was far away. Also there are large forests there and not many weeds. Here there are many weeds. I was afraid a wife from Awasi would not want to come and work in the gardens here. [He returns to details about crops.] At that time I was a seer. I cured a sick person and was given a chicken and some rice. I used them to make a sacrifice to the dead owners of the field. At first Lanmai and I shared a field, but I didn't get any of the beans, so I didn't want to cooperate with him any more. Then Laksmai called me to share a garden. Laksmai and I were Lanmai's "fathers." Twenty of us worked together to plant beans that year, and we gave a dance one night.

[He told of the versifying in Awasi about the garden—how they spoke of marrying the garden. Pause, which was rare in this informant. He again quoted some verses sung in Awasi—how the rice had rooted in six days, how one laughed to see it, and how all one's carrying baskets would be used up when one picked the crop. Then he went on to say that they worked a little every day to weed the beans. He discussed garden magic at length. He told how successful the harvest was. After a time I stopped him and asked about his quarrels in Awasi. He smiled at the memory and went on from there.]

Lifunmai was my elder brother [classificatory]. His child died. His father-in-law was very angry. He said the child died because its mother and father didn't take good care of it. He came to the village with his weapons and wanted to kill these two. I put on my weapons to fight him, but Awonmai [an older kinsman] also put on his weapons and told me to stand in back of him and he would meet the enraged father-in-law. However, before blows were exchanged people seized the two contestants, and finally the father-in-law was paid a big pig. Then we heard that the man had gone to the garden and was destroying it. I rushed out with my weapons, but the old man had already run away. He had not hurt the garden.

[I asked if he had dreamed last night and got the three following stories in the order of dreaming.]

I dreamed I went to Senlani's garden [a Lawatika man, also of the Maughieta lineage, so *ipso facto* a relative] and took some of his young corn. Senlani said I could not have it, so I hid it in my shawl and in my basket. I saw a tree house and thought I would go there to roast and eat the corn. Senlani shouted, "Someone has taken my corn." I looked

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

from Karieta ran back toward his village. One old man from Karieta [59x]
stood on a rock and shouted that they should not run away. "We are men and we don't run away when we fight; we just stay and fight through. Don't run. Stand here." So the men of Karieta gathered around the rock on which the old man stood and waited, but the people of Alurkowasi did not follow them. Padalang had been lying. Manimale was not dead. He just fell over and lay there, even though he hadn't been hit. His uncle yelled that he was dead, but he was not.

December 12, 1938

Two days ago I dreamed there were many women in the village and they threw stones at me. Then they came to talk to me. They said, "We didn't throw these stones. Here, take this stick and make two holes in one end and smooth it down. You will see a design in it." I saw this stick. It was near the women. I don't know where it came from.

When I was still young, maybe fifteen years old, six men and six [57] ●
women cut weeds together. The men and women quarreled. In the evenings after the older women went to fetch wood, the younger people used peastalk clubs with which to fight. Women pulled the men's legs and the men pulled the women's. Our bodies were sore. The men said, "Another time we shall continue." I was one of the men fighting. Another time there were about forty men and women working together in three fields. Toward evening the men said it was time to continue the fight, but the women ran off to fetch water. We just wanted to continue the earlier fight. [Cause of earlier fight?] The first time we fought it was because the men and women worked separately. The field was divided between them. The men raced the women in clearing weeds and beat them. Then the men said, "Maybe by and by you will eat rice baskets." [This was an obscure reference to the shape of the area that still remained to be weeded.] The women were angry with the men for making them ashamed, so they fought. After this quarrel the men said, "We mustn't work separately any more. We have to work together, men and women, so that we shan't quarrel."

Once forty of us were working together. In one day twenty of us [57c]
cleared Malemani's field and twenty of us cleared Tilemau's. That night five young men fought with five young women. We pulled each other's legs; we piled wood on each other's heads. A rat started running, and as two of us ran after it Manimale was bumped into by another boy and was knocked over. Manimale's sister was angry and began fighting. After this fight we said, "It is better that men and women work sepa- [57d]
rately." Manimale's sister was angry because as he fell he knocked a pea-

1:DuBois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

159 tore off the flesh so you could see the bone. [The interpreter shivered at this point.] I cried. I brushed it off. Riemau came to see and I told him that I had brushed the bat off and it must still be near. Riemau saw it in some weeds and shot it. In all we got five bats. Then Riemau helped me up to Lawatika and I stayed there overnight while the others went home. [Question.] No, I didn't dream of this afterward.

February 13, 1939

When I was about six or seven, I cried because mother said we should go to the garden and I didn't want to. So I stayed home and played with my friends in the village. In the afternoon mother brought me some corn, which I roasted and ate. Then I cried again. I cried a lot. I cried because I wanted to eat with father's guests. Mother and 139 father said I couldn't. The guests, they said, had to eat alone. I kept 574 crying until everyone was through eating. I cried until everyone was 865 asleep. Father woke up and heard me still crying. So father put a 867 basket over my head that reached down to my stomach. Father held me while mother poured water on my head through the basket. I was still crying hard. So mother and father talked nicely to me. They said, "When guests come, you can't eat with them. If you ate with them they wouldn't say anything here, but they would go home and say we didn't bring you up well because we let you eat with guests. We were angry with you for this reason, and for this reason we put a basket over your head and poured water on you." Then father said, "Will you act like this another time?" I was still crying under the basket and did not answer. Then father said, "Answer before I take off the basket." Then I said I wouldn't act like that again. Father said, "Next time guests come you mustn't stay near us but go with your mother." After that I stopped crying.

169 When I was about twelve or thirteen, father and mother went to cut weeds in Puorksivi. A big rain came. We were all there with my friends. [It is customary to have a group of children help in communal 476 field work.] My friends went on working. I sat under a raincape be- 857 hind the line of workers. Father was working at the end of the line. He came toward me but I did not see him. He snatched off my cape and asked why I was just sitting. He said, "When you grow up you won't be accustomed to work and you will be lazy." He took my hands and rubbed them in the dirt, saying, "Your nails are long. You are lazy." All my nails were ripped and they bled. So I cried and ran away to Alurkowasi, to Kolata [his father's first wife]. She said, "Maybe your mother and father have many male children, that they rub your

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939), 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

wood. He said that for the first days it would be light, and during that time women must gather wood, but after that it would be dark. I asked, "If it is dark when the officials come, how will they get along?" My friend said, "When it is dark, people must always go in pairs. When women go to fetch water, they must go along with someone else [as formerly in days of warfare]. If they don't, the souls of the dead will shoot them." I asked what would happen after it had got dark, and he said, "In time it will be light again; then an earthquake will come. After the earthquake you will see a large lamp hanging in mid-air. Thereafter the earth will be good again." [When Malelaka talked with his spirit friend, he stood on the dance place in front of the special house he had built. He heard the voice of the spirit in the house but did not see him.]

When I was about fourteen years old, people were waging war. If father or mother went to Likuwatang to market or went to work in the fields, I stayed home and took care of my younger siblings. I stayed in the house with them all the time to guard them and cook for them. When mother and father went to work, I took cassava, pounded it, took out the fibers, and pounded it again. I fetched water. When my mother returned she had only to cook.

When I was about sixteen, I started field work. I joined my friends in work groups [*tatul*]. Our mothers would cook for us. Young boys and girls worked together. We worked, fought, played, and pulled each other. The older people saw that we did not work and that we thought only of playing and fighting. We told them that we worked before we started playing, but really we used to get lazy and just play. This went on all year until it was time to cut weeds again. Because we were young, we would cut only one or two fields and then play. When rain began to fall, we finally cleaned up our fields. We planted our own fields before we planted those of our elders. We weeded our own fields before we weeded those of our elders. They said, "Perhaps you are going to eat food only from your fields?" After that we all went and helped our elders. Then we began to raise pigs and chickens in partnership with people. But when they were half grown, our elders took them and roasted them, giving us only little ones in exchange. Since our elders took our pigs all the time, we didn't care to raise them any more; we just went to play instead. We gave up raising pigs.

When we were still older, father said, "We shan't need your pigs any more. You had better raise some and buy gongs and mokos for your bride-price with them."

When I was about sixteen, I worked with a group [*tatul*]. When

1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
OF5 Alor OF5

159 bring us some more in your basket." [Did you want to?] Yes. They were my elder brothers, and so I said I would. [What did your mother say?] She said that since my elder brothers had eaten it, I had better take them some more.

[I asked whether she felt that they usually had less food in their home than others had in theirs. She didn't seem to grasp the idea.] If [261 476] one is hungry and hasn't food, one can work for another person and will be given a bundle of corn in payment. Or if one hasn't enough, a [572] friend may help by inviting one to come dig in the garden for tubers. [Did your mother have such a friend?] Yes, Kolangkalieta. [The mother of her own friend, Kolata. The mother is also called simply Kolang in this account.]

[Long pause. I told her to go ahead. She sighed heavily. This was the first time she had permitted herself this sort of emotional expression.] Occasionally, if Kolangkalieta sat all day and didn't go to her garden, mother would put tubers she had dug into a calabash dish and give them to her. When Kolangkalieta went to File, where she had a garden, she would bring us back kanari nuts and give them to us to eat.

[I asked about the elder sister, Falepang, who was sick.] Once when I went playing, Falepang and mother stayed in the house. When they cooked, mother said, "Don't save any for Lomani; eat it all up." [Why?] [861] Because mother told me to wait until the food had all been served before beginning to eat and said I should eat with my sisters, all of us together. So I said, "If that is so, I don't want to eat." And I went away. Then Falepang took one spoonful for herself and the other she put aside for me. She ate every other spoonful; she hid the half she had saved for me, so mother would not see it. Then when I came home Falepang called to me to come up, and she gave me the food she had saved. She said, "Mother is often angry, and she didn't want to save food for you, but here is some." Then Falepang sent me for greens. We added them to what Falepang had cooked, and we ate together. Then Falepang said I should go fetch some bamboo so that she could make me a basket. When I went out, Falepangmai and Kawaimani wanted to come too; so all three of us went. We brought it back, and Falepang wove us baskets. She made big ones for the older ones and a [285] little one for me. She overlaid them with rua bamboo. She knew how to overlay either the whole basket or only the top and bottom. She said, "The big ones are for you, and you can fetch corn and greens in them. The little one is for Lomani, and she can fetch grasshoppers."

Once there was a dance in Alurkowsti. The day before, Falepangmai

2: DuBois E-5 (1938-1939) 1941 OF5 Alor OF5

stress that throughout Indonesia is the concept of man's creation from molded clay. In Atimelang this widespread motif is altered so that man is created from molded rice and corn meal; that is, man is made from food.

Also food, rather than native currencies, is generally considered adequate pay for labor. The guest-workers who help cultivate a large rice field, who assist in erecting a lineage house who attend memorial funeral ceremonies, or who participate in similar ceremonial activities are all fed in return for their participation. When cooperative groups are formed for work in fields, the host of the day must furnish the midday meal.

There are other attitudes toward food which are perhaps less dramatic and institutionalized, but just as telling. If women are pounding rice or corn, any kernel which falls from the mortar is carefully picked up. Children of five or six have already absorbed this attitude and are as meticulous as the adults of both sexes. A single bean left in a pod during shelling will be retrieved by children as well as adults. In clearing ground even isolated food plants will be carefully preserved. The meticulous fashion in which all food articles are saved and used does not coincide with any actual scarcity.

The natives also refer frequently to the annual "hungry period." This is the end of the dry season when there is no actual want but only less of the preferred foods. For a month or two natives depend more on cassava and sweet potatoes than on corn. Yet the culture phrases this as a period of food stress. In addition there were references to periods of famine as though they were an ever present threat. Careful inquiry revealed only two periods of shortage within the memories of people between forty and fifty. Both of these were due to factors which had disorganized the community so that for one season the fields had not been as extensively planted and as carefully weeded as is customary. There is no doubt that food, especially of the preferred sort, was scarce on these two occasions, but it was procurable by purchase in nearby communities and there is no evidence that anyone died of hunger. There is, in fact, no indication that hunger is ever necessary if a proper amount of foresight and industry has been exercised. Perhaps one of the best indications that the concern over food scarcity is of psychological origin and not realistic is that there is no land hunger. No one ever expresses poverty or wealth in terms of land, although there is actually great variation between consumption units in the number and fertility of fields owned. This is in spite a strong preoccupation with wealth as status in the culture. Data on the yield of the fields indicate that crops are good and on the whole adequate not only to feed the consumption units but also to provide surpluses for contributions to feasts.

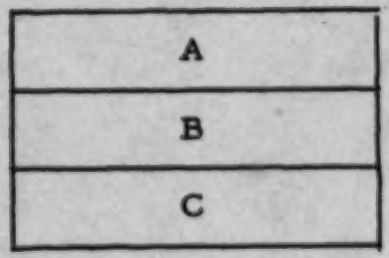
In addition there is a singular agricultural fiction in Alor. This concerns the so-called "good years" and "rat years" which come in alternate seasons. Theory has it that there is no use planting rice fields or any outlying plots during "rat years" because rodents will eat up the crop before it can be harvested. In the "good years" there are supposed to be fewer rats and there is a chance to lay in surpluses for large feasts. The theory of alternating years of rat plagues has no basis in reality. Essentially the idea is a fiction that every other year you are the helpless victim of depredations on your food supply. As one might expect, there are

3: DuBois

OF5 Alor

291, 342, 426, 436, 476, 482, 584

The plates appearing on page 482 have been reproduced for the files in the following manner:



To build a lineage house—one of the main Alorese expenditures—much heavy labor is needed (below and left), and the whole community is invited to help the family which erects one. Since there may be a dozen or more feasts as payment for the help, construction may extend over several years to allow for the necessary accumulation of pig

342
476

Cyprus 87

B-Bulletin 8-5 (1950-1959)1949 OPS Also OPS

613
476 A more usual outlay is for the building of lineage houses. This is the joint responsibility of all the descendants in the male line of a designated forebear, and the house becomes the center of ancestral worship. To build them, much heavy labor is needed, and in this labor the whole community is invited to help. In return the helpers are feasted, and that means both buying pigs and slaughtering one's own. Since there may be a dozen or more such feasts in the course of erecting a lineage house, construction may progress in short stages over a period of years to allow for the necessary accumulation of pigs.

437 The death feasts are another object of expenditure. When a man dies, certain of his kin, 764 the descendants of his mother's brothers, con-602 tribute the shroud, grave services, pigs and mokos. These preliminary feasts and services occur during the first eight days after death. Then, anywhere from a year to twenty years later, two return feasts must be given at which the mother's brothers' descendants are repaid at high rates of interest, which must be agreed upon by negotiation. They may range as high as three hundred and four hundred per cent. Obviously not all the dead get such elaborate financial treatment. The small payoffs on the burial rites for children or young men and women may be made as a side issue when feasts for their more 153 important kin are given. The bookkeeping involved in these elaborate and long-drawn-out transactions must be carried in people's heads. There is no system of writing, not even a system of tallies, to keep track of their complexity. One man who gave such a feast summarized the transactions in connection with that ceremony alone. He had fifty-seven creditors and debtors involving two hundred items to remember. This was certainly no mean intellectual feat. I should hesitate to maintain a causal connection, but it is true that the singular accomplishments of the Alorese in practical financial matters are paralleled by an equally singular lack of interest in what we should call abstract thinking or theorizing.

587 The largest, most persistent exchange rela-606 tionship which a man establishes in his lifetime is with his wife's family. Marriage is in no way a religious or a ceremonial affair. It is essentially financial—the establishment of a system of group exchanges. There is first of all a bride price in moko matched by a dowry in moko. The dowry, however, is only about a third of the bride price. These exchanges are not paid all at once, but gradually over a period of many years. The girl goes to live in the boy's house when he pays the first and largest moko. After that the

[c.485 B]